

The Immaculate Conception and Our Redemption Sister Millie's Identity with the Sufferings of Jesus

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.” (Genesis 3: 15.)

Jesus is the offspring of Mary who will crush the head of Satan. His followers are His heel who will come under attack by Satan. This passage is known as the Protoevangelium, the “first gospel,” the first good news after sin entered our world through the fallen angels and our first parents and plunged all creation into a sea of darkness and opposition to God. But God’s redemptive intention did not begin in the Garden of Eden with this promise. It began in His Eternally Omniscient Mind and merciful Will with a plan that would center around a woman, a Virgin as foretold by Isaiah, who would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit and bear a Child whose name would be Emmanuel, God with us, Messiah, King of kings and Lord of lords to rule over the world until the end of time. Our redemption began with the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. The Church



*Murillo's Immaculate
Conception in our Patronal
Church*

has long applied this Genesis passage to Mary who would share most intimately in Christ’s redeeming work to deliver us from sin and restore our nature and all creation to its original beauty as designed by God. Not only would God restore our nature, but He would raise it up to His own divine nature in the God-man who would stoop so low as to assume the condition of a helpless child in the womb of His mother. This small child would re-sanctify the whole of human nature from conception to natural death in His Sacred Humanity, making perfect atonement for our sins and uniting us to Himself in His Divine Indwelling Presence and sanctifying grace. This Immaculate Mother was preserved from even the slightest stain of original or personal sin in anticipation of the redeeming grace of her beloved Son. No other creature can boast of such privilege and favor with God. She is the New Eve, the Mother of all the living, the pure image of the Bride of Christ, Holy Mother Church.

If the son of Mary was to be the Messiah, it was imperative that he belong to the family of King David through male descendancy. Joseph’s mission, then, revealed by the angel, was to incorporate Jesus, the son of Mary, into the genealogy of David, thereby conferring, humanly speaking, the title of Messiah on Jesus. According to Jewish law and custom, Joseph legally adopted Mary’s child when he welcomed her to his home. When Mary, carrying Jesus in her womb, crossed the threshold of Joseph’s house, Joseph conferred his name, Son of David, on the child that he thereby willingly adopted. Joseph bestowed the title Messiah on Jesus through his act of faith. (Rev. Frederick L. Miller, ST. JOSEPH: OUR FATHER IN FAITH, Knights of Columbus, Building the Domestic Church series, 2008-2018, Page 12.)

There is no more intimate involvement in Christ’s work of redemption than that of Mary who gave Him her pure flesh for His Humanity without which we would not be redeemed. God is family and He created humankind as a family mirroring His own inner Trinitarian life. Since sin came through the first family, Adam and Eve, so grace would come through the restored family, Joseph and Mary, the new Eve and Mother of all the living. We speak of Jesus as the new Adam, but in a real sense, St. Joseph, spouse of the Virgin-Mother of God, takes Adam’s place of headship in the restored human family

while standing in place of the Heavenly Father over the Sacred Humanity. Mary gave Jesus her flesh; Joseph, a son of David, gave Jesus His name as Messiah and his identity as one born of the House of David in fulfillment of the prophecies foretold about the Savior of the world. These three persons, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, constitute the Hypostatic order of Grace which makes the Incarnation and our Redemption possible. Through their assents of faith and obedience to the Will of God, Mary and Joseph became, in a descending order, unequivocally co-redeemers with Christ. Ref: (Rev. Frederick L. Miller, **ST. JOSEPH: OUR FATHER IN FAITH**, Knights of Columbus, Building the Domestic Church series, 2008-2018, Page 12.)

The Immaculate Conception was God's idea to initiate the Incarnation and Redemptive mysteries into our world and our nature. Without Mary and Joseph Jesus's Incarnation and our redemption would not have taken place. God willed it so. And He also willed that we participate in our own redemption through acceptance of it and living in a way that unites us to Jesus' saving action and grace.

How does Sister Millie share in Christ's redeeming work to sanctify the family and save souls? In the early 1940's she understood her mission was for the sanctification of the restored human family through imitation of the simple virtues of the Holy Family of Nazareth who lived unceasingly in the Presence of the Most Holy Trinity. Our Lady of America addresses the enormity of her mission, for the family is under demonic attack.

"Your mission is vast, my child. It reaches to the ends of the earth. It will continue until time is no more, because there will always be the need for the sanctification of the family and of souls. Fear not, small one, for it is through the most unlikely of instruments that God works His wonders. He chooses where the world would not. He makes that possible which the world deems impossible. He stops where the world would pass on. God has no need of anyone, yet He chooses the smallest of the small for His glory. Sweet child, let your humble heart be filled with a great confidence for my Son is in love with your lowliness and simplicity of heart. Make known to souls the preference my Son has for humility. Behold, I, His humble Mother, always looked upon myself as His lowly Handmaid, ready, at all times to do His bidding. The humble, so greatly loved by Him, are also, in deed and in truth, my children." (June 5, 1957 letter.)



As Sister Millie's desire for a contemplative life increased, so did her mystical experiences, but they were not all sweetness and light. She wrote Father Leibold of periods of diabolical temptations and spiritual darkness that sometimes lasted for weeks and months. On June 4, 1956, the anniversary of her perpetual union with Jesus, He again appeared and asked her if she would be willing to suffer all things to give Him to souls. When she said **"yes,"** He said: **"My little, white dove, will you then continue to wear the crown of thorns and permit yourself to be nailed to the Cross?"** She could not refuse Jesus anything. She always said **"yes"** to Him. She was the bride of His Heart. Soon after, in the fall of 1956, she was assigned to Rome City, Indiana for the second time (she had been there in 1947), but she had a terrible foreboding about the place and did not wish to be there. She was forced to stay when she could not find someone to take her place. Our Lord assured her, **"I will be with you wherever you are, spouse of My Heart. You have nothing to fear."** She had another frightening attack from Satan in Rome City. E. Michael Jones recounts it in his 12/83 edition of Fidelity magazine. She described feeling like she was in a "ring of evil."

Sister Mildred had just recently been transferred to the water cure staffed by her order of nuns in Indiana to wait on tables but had not been happy about the move. When she got to her room, she felt, as she said later, “like jumping out of the window.” She left her room that night and went to the chapel, but the feeling did not leave her. “It seemed to me,” she said, “like I was in a ring of evil. I couldn’t get out of it, and it was telling me to get out of there.” One night she awoke with the sense that something was perched on her pillow a little behind her head. Before she could discern just what it was, she felt it grab her face across the eyes and pull down on them. She further describes the attack. It is as though two huge, horrible arms encircled themselves around me and like a monstrous vise kept tightening and tightening. I could help myself in no way except by prayer. So I cried out “Jesus!” The vise became tighter. I cried out in terror, “Jesus, Mary!” By this time the pressure, the pain became so unbearable I was gasping for breath, but I managed to cry out one last prayer—“Jesus, Mary, Joseph!” Suddenly, the pain stopped. [Oh what power in those holy names!]

After this experience Sister was left with a profound peace that never left her. She had also been given a new dimension to her mission that was beyond the sanctification of the family and beyond personal sanctification from within through the Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity: **Reparation for sins against the chaste virtue!**

Our Lord has since told me that one special part of my “mission” was to make reparation for sins against the chaste virtue. He said that to do this I would have to suffer these “attacks” off and on, all through my life. He asked if I were willing. I shuddered, Father, but how could I refuse Him? He is so good; besides, His grace would always be there to help me. But it is a cause of much suffering to me and mental distress. I never know when these “attacks” will come, so can do nothing but pray. These attacks usually last only a few moments or minutes, sometimes longer, but they always seem to last such a long time.

Father Leibold had earlier advised Sister that ...God, in directing souls to more intimate union with Himself, often plunges them into total darkness, loss of consolation, and the inability to meditate or pray. There may also be external crosses—misunderstandings from superiors or equals, jealousy and false accusations, or a feeling of being lost forever. The hardest sufferings to bear are those which come from one’s own religious sisters. He told her that God loves us as much in the darkness as when the sun is shining, but we love more purely when the sun is not shining because we love it for its own goodness. Such sufferings identify us more acutely with the sufferings of Jesus and His most holy Mother. (Letter of Bishop Paul Leibold, October 20, 1954.)

Sister wrote Father Leibold of her difficulty reconciling herself to God’s choice of her for this mission, but she came to understand that **“For This I Was Born!”**

...as you know, Father, I couldn’t seem to be able to reconcile myself to the fact that God should choose such a nothing like me for so great and tremendous a mission. It seemed so impossible to me that I was often plagued with the thought that I was being deceived, that I was nothing but a fraud, a victim of my own imagination and self-love. Yet the strange thing was, deep down in my soul, I knew this was not so, as I would rather die than be guilty of such things and thus become a stumbling block to others. I knew, in spite of these temptations that harassed me that I lived in the Truth and eventually this truth would free me from these chains. What suffering this caused me, what heaviness of heart, but always I turned to Our Lady with the conviction that through her, help would be given me. It was not in vain. I entrusted my cause to her. On her feast of the holy rosary, the grace and light that flooded my soul marked the beginning of a new phase in my life. I have accepted wholly and entirely the role God has destined for me. There is no longer any question in my mind that it was for this I was born, and for this I must spend myself. I will always be a nothing, yet a nothing full of confidence in Him Who chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of this world to confound the strong. For it is not right that

flesh should glory in His sight. How happy I am to be such a nothing, to be counted as naught. "Hide me away, my God, I am only fit to be hidden away in some dark corner, unseen by anyone but You."

Conflict with the active order threatened the survival of the cloister. Sister Millie wrote to Sister Florecita, the foundress, who had come under particular attack by the administration of the active order who seemed to want the cloister to disappear.

This morning, Monday, before I woke, Our Lady came to me as she always does when she comes, dressed all in pure white, and holding out her hand she said, "Do not be afraid. We will walk together to the Father's house." Sister, by this I came to understand that she not only meant me but the cloister. I am certain of it. That is why I am no longer worried about what will happen to us. Our Lady is and will be with us in a very special way to help us with any needs and problems that may confront us. I thought this might be a comfort to you, Sister Florecita, my dearest and best of friends. I hope that, after reading the above, you will continue to believe in me and not push me off as someone who imagines things. Truly this isn't so. God bless you, always. Faithfully, Sister Ephrem (Mildred Marie). [When Sister began to wonder if she could possibly deceive herself, a voice within said: "You are too simple to deceive yourself."]



Sister Florecita & Sister Millie

On the anniversary of her perpetual union with Jesus, He asked her again: "Bride of My Heart, do you still wish to suffer all things to give Me to souls?" She answered: "Yes, yes dear Lord, I am poor and wretched, and unworthy, but you know what is in my heart." Her August 6, 1956 letter to Bishop Leibold states: Jesus came to me holding a large cross and a crown of thorns. He said to me smiling, as though He knew what the answer would be (He did of course.) "I come with My cross and My crown of thorns, will you accept Me My spouse?" You know the only answer I could give, Father. Who could refuse Jesus anything? During the night I awoke and Jesus said to me, and He said it with a profound emphasis: "I have placed you upon the Altar of Sacrifice."

St. Paul speaks of "filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions"? How can anything be lacking in Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross? Christ cannot *personally* offer himself to people today. In and through God's people—especially missionaries—he offers himself to them. And so they fill up what is lacking, namely, the personal presentation of the sufferings of Christ in their own bodies. The thing that is lacking is us. Our role is to unite our suffering with that of Jesus to create an eternal offering of love.

"O Son, Divine Lord, crucify me with Yourself that I may become in union with you a sacrifice of praise to the glory of Your Father." (Prayer to the Indwelling Trinity.)

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Please honor Our Lady, the Immaculate One, with this Hour of Grace on December 8th her feast. Pray for all your needs.

<https://stthomasaquinassociety.org/prayers/hour-of-grace-rosa-mystical/>